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6
A MEMORIAL

OF

YORK MONTHLY MEETING

OF FRIENDS,

RESPECTING

LINDLEY MURRAY.



YORK:

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February 3, 1942

A MEMORIAL

OF YORK MONTHLY MEETING, RESPECTING OUR

FRIEND LINDLEY MURRAY, DECEASED.

THE ancient practice of our Society, of preserving Memorials of some of its members, whose lives and conversation have eminently illustrated our Christian principles, has, we believe, been in various ways beneficial. The account of those who have fought the good fight, and kept the faith, and who, through infinite mercy, we have cause to believe, have received the immortal crown, is calculated to stimulate the lukewarm to enter on the Christian warfare, and to confirm the faith of those



who are already engaged, and animate them in the spiritual conflict. It is with these views, that we feel disposed to record a notice of the services and character of our late much beloved friend and elder, Lindley Murray.

He was a native of Pennsylvania, North America ; and his parents were respected members of the Society of Friends. His father designed him for a merchant; and he gave him an excellent education. But Lindley Murray, having entertained views of mental improvement superior to what is generally afforded by mercantile pursuits, on leaving school, sought for some employment more congenial with the bent of his mind. He gave a decided preference to the Law, and having pursued his studies for four years with an eminent Solicitor, he commenced practice in New York ; where his know-

ledge and talents soon developed themselves, and appeared likely to gain for him considerable eminence. But it pleased Divine Providence to arrest, by sickness, the course of his ardent pursuits ; and, by a succession of circumstances which might then appear opposed to his usefulness and comfort, to direct his future life to those purposes which Infinite Wisdom saw best.

About the year 1784, his constitution being very much enfeebled by illness, his Physicians advised the trial of a milder climate, as the most likely means to re-establish his health. He had, some years before, been in this country, which induced him to give a decided preference to England. At this time he had been married about seventeen years ; and the prospect of leaving their home and near connexions

was, to him and his beloved wife, a severe trial. They hoped, however, that, with the blessing of Providence on the means thus used, they might be favoured, at no distant period, to return to their native country; which they left with the unity and sympathy of their friends, as expressed in the certificate from the Monthly Meeting of New York, addressed to one of the Meetings in London. They landed in the first month, 1785, and in the course of that year fixed their residence at Holdgate, near York; at which place they continued to live until the time of Lindley Murray's decease.

During youth, the natural vivacity of his mind led him into some of the gaieties incident to that period of life; but there is good reason to believe, that he was early made sensible of the operation of Divine grace, and that his morals and principles

were preserved from contamination. For some years previously to his settling in England, he had been led to form a correct estimate of the value of all earthly pursuits; to turn his back on the applause of the world; and had become an humble, consistent, and exemplary member of our religious Society; his mind, as it matured, having made the principles of his education those of his judgment.

Such was the character of our dear friend, when, by a Providence which we desire to acknowledge with gratitude, his lot was first cast amongst us. The humility of his deportment, and the Christian spirit which breathed through his whole conduct, greatly endeared him to the members of this meeting; and afforded him a scope for usefulness, of which he diligently availed himself, for the benefit of all around him.

His health continued so delicate, as to prevent his taking a very active part in our Meetings for Discipline, or in the concerns of society at large ; yet, contemplating his time, his talents, and all that he possessed, but as a trust of which he had to render an account, he proved, by his future life, how much may be done for the good of others, under circumstances apparently unfavourable, when the love of God, and of our fellow creatures, are the governing principles of the heart.

In the year 1787, he published the book well known by the title of "The Power of Religion on the Mind." The consolation which he had himself derived from the hopes and promises of the Gospel, led him, doubtless, to the selection of these striking examples of the influence of religion, "in retirement, affliction, and at the approach

of death ;" exhibiting its efficacy in retreat from the world, and under the most trying circumstances of human existence. His desire that many persons should reap the benefit of this Selection, induced him to have a large number of copies printed for gratuitous distribution.

At the time of Lindley Murray's coming to York, a school had just been established for the education of Girls of the Society of Friends, which soon became an object of great interest to him: and it was for the benefit of this school, that he first attempted to simplify, and thereby facilitate, the acquirement of elementary instruction. In his publications for this purpose, he not only excluded whatever was calculated to impress false principles and sentiments in morals and religion, but he also aimed to make the course of instruction, in the

elements of useful knowledge, subservient to a still higher object—that of imbuing the susceptible minds of youth, with the purest principles and precepts of Christian morality. The fruits of these unostentatious labours cannot be accurately estimated ; but we have reason to believe that, under the Divine blessing, they have had a decided and extensive influence in the formation of virtuous and religious character.

In the year 1795, seven friends were committed to York Castle for refusing to pay tithes ; the claimant having pursued the Exchequer process, instead of the more easy mode of recovery provided by Law. Lindley Murray assisted the prisoners in the statement of their case, which was published under the title of “The Prisoners’ Defence ;” and also in the further support of their cause, in reply to the allegations

of the prosecutor. In these works, the soundness of his judgment, and his habitual self-government and Christian temper, were strikingly evinced. His opponent had attacked the objects of his severity with harsh invective; the replies returned not railing for railing, but displayed the force of truth, clothed in the spirit of Him who prayed for his persecutors.

These publications, as well as the Christian conduct of the sufferers, excited a feeling of respect and commiseration for them, which, we believe, tended to strengthen, in the public mind, the testimony they supported; and to call forth, even from the members of his own profession, a general expression of disapprobation of the measures pursued by the claimant.

In the year 1812, Lindley Murray published "A Selection from Bishop Horne's Commentary on the Psalms"—a work which, for many years, formed a part of his daily reading. In the latter years of his life, his bodily infirmities increased; but his mind was preserved in intellectual and spiritual brightness; and he was particularly watchful, that his weakness of body should not lead to any habits of indolence, or unnecessary self-indulgence.

A considerable portion of his time, during the latter part of life, was employed in the correction and improvement of the numerous editions of his various works. His concern for the religious instruction of the youth of our Society, led him, when in his seventieth year, to prepare and publish "A Compendium of Religious Faith and Practice," chiefly designed for this use: and shortly afterwards he published a

little work on "The Duty and Benefit of a daily perusal of the Holy Scriptures in Families ;" which evinced his continued concern for the best interests of society at large. Thus was our dear friend engaged, during the course of a long life, to exhibit in his daily walk, and to promote in the world, whatsoever things were honest, and lovely, and of good report.

It remains for us to mention a few particulars more immediately illustrating his religious views and private character, and his general usefulness as a member of our religious Society. Whilst health permitted him, he was a diligent attender of our meetings for worship and discipline ; in the former of which he was occasionally engaged to offer a word of exhortation ; and his communications were very acceptable to Friends. In the year 1791, he was,

with the full unity of the Monthly Meeting, recorded as a Minister. Doubts attended his own mind as to the propriety of this step on the part of his friends; and the weakness of his voice seemed to confirm him in the belief, that public ministry was not the line of service in which his Divine Master designed to employ him. Under this impression, in the year 1802, he requested that his name might no longer stand in the list of ministers, and his wish was complied with. He continued, however, in life and conversation, to be an eminent preacher of righteousness—illustrating, in all his deportment, our Christian testimonies with uniform consistency; and, we believe we may truly say, adorning the Gospel of God his Saviour in all things.

His charities both public and private, but particularly the latter, were extensive.

He was a firm friend to the education of the poorer classes of society, which he evinced, not only by his liberality in assisting public institutions for this purpose, but by his kind attention to the wants of those in his own neighbourhood, at a period considerably prior to the general interest being excited to the subject. He was very solicitous for the improvement of the condition of the Indian aborigines of his native country, and of the African race. He took a lively interest in the proceedings of the Bible Society, and in every thing which related to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom on the earth.

His exemplary moderation and simplicity in every thing connected with his own expenditure,—in his dress, in the furniture of his house and table,—and the entire coincidence of his beloved and faithful

partner in all his views, enabled them to devote a considerable portion of their income, and the profits which he derived from his numerous works, to objects of piety and benevolence. He was at the same time hospitable in his house ; and, though liberal—discriminating and judicious in his charity. His mind, indeed, was richly imbued with Christian love ; from which Divine root flowed that meekness, patience, gentleness, charity, and forgiving temper, which he so uniformly evinced.

Although, during nearly the last twenty years of his life, he was unable, from the state of his health, to unite with us in public worship, yet his zeal and devotion were not, we are persuaded, in any degree diminished. His delight was still in the law of the Lord ; and in his law did he meditate day and night. Nor, though

necessarily more secluded from their society, were his love and attachment to his friends abated. He was ready and willing, when of ability, to be consulted by them ; and he continued to the last to take a lively interest in whatever related to their welfare. He rejoiced especially in the indication of spiritual growth amongst us ; and was greatly concerned for the due exercise of our Christian discipline, in the spirit of meekness and wisdom.

He stood in the station of an elder, from the year 1802 to the period of his death ; and the judgment and advice of one whose experience was so extensive, and whose natural powers and acquirements had been so sanctified by Divine Grace, was a privilege to us, for which, whilst we deplore the loss, we desire to render our humble acknowledgments to the Giver of all good.

Our dear friend, notwithstanding his various privations from the state of his health, was remarkable for cheerfulness ; and he was frequently led to number his blessings, and to acknowledge that his afflictions, and what appeared to be the most adverse circumstances of his life, were designed to promote his final well-being. He never repined at his long confinement, but was wont to observe, how pleasant was his prison, if he might use the term.

Whilst thus cultivating the Christian enjoyment of life, as an evidence of his gratitude to God, he was often led, with great humility, to contemplate the close of it, as the commencement of a state of infinite enjoyment. He frequently expressed the sense of his own imperfections and unworthiness ; and uniformly evinced that his hopes of salvation rested solely on

the mercy of God, through the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his union with his beloved partner, he thus expresses himself in writing: "In the course of the long period of our union, we have had our trials and afflictions; we have seen a variety of trying events and situations: but we have been favoured, too, with many great and distinguished blessings. Even the afflictions, and what appeared to be adverse occurrences, were designed for our final well-being. I hope the gracious intention of these dispensations will be fully answered, by our being safely landed, through the atonement and intercession of our blessed Redeemer, on those happy shores where no clouds nor storms are ever known; and where, after millions of ages of happiness shall have passed away, we

shall only seem to have begun our felicity ; —a felicity that will never end.”

The following memorandum found in his writing desk, but to which there is no date, evinces that habit of watchfulness and self-examination, so necessary to the growth of Christian character : “ Preserve me from all vain self-complacency ; from seeking the applauses of men ; and from all solicitude about what they may think or say of me. May I be made truly humble, and of a meek and quiet spirit. If I have done any good to my fellow creatures, or in any degree promoted the will of my Heavenly Father, may I unfeignedly give Him all the glory ; attributing nothing to myself, and taking comfort only from the reflection, that an employment in his service affords an evidence that his mercy is towards me—that I am not forsaken by

Him—and that He is training me for an inhabitant of his blessed kingdom ; there to glorify and serve my God and Redeemer for ever."

A few days after entering on his eighty-first year, he wrote as follows : " For the mercies and preservation, and the continuance of the many blessings we have had together," (alluding to his wife,) " we have abundant cause to be thankful to our heavenly Protector and Father. May He be pleased to prepare us for his holy and happy kingdom, where we shall then have to rejoice for ever, in rendering continual thanksgivings and praises, and the most devout and zealous services, to our Heavenly Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, one God, blessed for ever ! "

These memorandums express, we believe, the daily aspirations and acknowledgments

of our dear friend's mind ; and in this state of preparation, and of humble and comfortable reliance on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, was he, we doubt not, found, when the messenger of death delivered his hasty summons ; and called him from the labours of the Church militant on earth, to the joys of the Church triumphant in heaven.

On the evening of the thirteenth of the second month, 1826, he was suddenly seized with a severe attack of indisposition ; and on the morning of the sixteenth he breathed his last, in great peace and resignation, in the eighty-first year of his age. His remains were interred in Friends' burying ground at York ; a large number of friends and other respectable inhabitants of the city attending his funeral, and the subsequent meeting.

our Monthly Meeting, held
seventeenth of the fifth, and
of the sixth month, 1826.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER
THOMAS PROCTER
DAVID PRIESTMAN
GEORGE BAKER
WILLIAM RICHARDSON
WILLIAM PROCTER
THOMAS ALLIS
JOHN SCARR
JOHN BLECKLY
JOHN SANDERSON
CALEB FLETCHER
WILLIAM SIMPSON
ROBERT WALLER
JOHN WEBSTER
JOHN MASON
JOHN TUKE
SAMUEL TUKE (by desire)
W. H. ALEXANDER
SIMEON WEBSTER

JOSEPH KING
THOMAS MASON
JOSEPH ROWNTREE
SAMUEL LAY
CALEB WILLIAMS
THOMAS BACKHOUSE
WILLIAM WEBSTER
SIMEON WEBSTER, JUN.
JOHN WEBSTER, JUN.
JOHN B. GILES.

Signed in the Women's Meeting, by

HANNAH MURRAY (by desire)
SARAH TUKE
MARY BACKHOUSE
ANN PRIESTMAN
ALICE HORNOR
HANNAH RICHARDSON
MARTHA RICHARDSON
HANNAH SCARR
ELIZABETH FOTHERGILL

SARAH ALLIS
REBECCA FOTHERGILL
REBECCA TUKE
ANN TUKE
DOROTHY BLECKLY
ANN WEBSTER
DEBORAH SANDERSON
ELIZ. ROWNTREE, JUN.
SARAH BAKER
HANNAH MENNELL
ELIZABETH PROCTER
ISABELLA WEBSTER
CATHARINE MASON
ELIZABETH BACKHOUSE
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JANE VENTRESS
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